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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

9 March 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD

SUBJECT: The Issue of Discipline at the Moscow Conference

1. The attached Memorandum for the Director is forwarded for information.

2. This Memorandum is not a full examination of all the issues which were in contention at the Conference. Rather it is an examination of what happened regarding the very important issue of discipline within the Communist movement. In brief, it shows how the Chinese beat off Soviet attempts to write the primacy of the USSR into the Declaration and how they achieved a text which preserved for them a full freedom of maneuver.

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C E N T R A L I N T E L L I G E N C E A G E N C Y

28 February 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: The Issue of Discipline at the Moscow Conference

1. We will be a long time studying the Sino-Soviet documents. Thus far it turns out that there was practically no Soviet ideological proposition which went unchallenged by the Chinese, and practically no area of interstate relations which was exempt from the general exacerbation. We will need to ponder the implications of the rift (now that we know its depth) not only for the two giants, but for all the other parties, about whom we can also learn much more than we knew before.

2. At this point, however, and as a warmup for NIE 10-61,* it might be useful to sketch the main outlines of the Moscow Conference and identify its chief results. Briefly, the ideological issues were compromised, with the USSR ending up ahead on points. The state

* NIE 10-61, "Authority and Control in the Communist Movement," due May 1961.

TOP SECRET

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issues (economic and military cooperation, border problems) probably remain unsettled; at any rate, we know of no resolution. And on the all-important issue of discipline, the Soviets took a defeat.

3. The issues were debated at what should be considered as one continuing conference, running from 30 September to 1 December. The agenda was a Soviet draft resolution, discussed throughout October by an Editorial Commission representing 26 parties, then through November by the full Conference of 81 parties. Literally hundreds of amendments were offered (not all by the Chinese); old grudges were raked up; personal insults were exchanged. But throughout the entire process, all the participants knew that a final draft had to be produced. And the fascinating thing about reading the record is to watch the issues progressively narrowed down, through a succession of compromises, to the real nub of the argument: how is the Communist movement to be run?

4. En route to this point, progress was made by a method which should be familiar to all coordinators, that of incorporating into the text both sides of the question. Thus, where the Soviets stressed the possibility of preventing war, they had to accede to Chinese additions pointing out how the imperialists were thirsting for it. Again Peiping succeeded in balancing the Soviet stress on

TOP SECRET

nonviolent revolution with a discussion of the need in many cases for violence to overthrow the exploiters. Most of these "solutions" were achieved during October, and when the Editorial Commission had finished its work, the problem of discipline remained in splendid isolation for all to see.

5. This problem was embodied in three Chinese objections. First, they wished to excise, in the condemnation of revisionism, the phrase "national communism." Apparently they feared that this phrase was to be the foundation for a future charge against either their internal innovations or their violations of "proletarian internationalism" (i.e., Soviet-determined world Bloc policy).

6. Second, the Chinese objected to the "all-around affirmation" of the 20th and 21st Congresses of the Soviet Party, that is, to the claim that the pronouncements of these congresses had universal validity for all Communists. They complained that they were not consulted in the preparation of these Soviet meetings, that they did not agree with all the formulations which came out of them, and that they could not agree to dogma being propounded in this manner. As the Chinese stated:

The CPSU replaced the wisdom of all the parties with its own 20th and 21st Congresses. We declare that certain parties cannot enjoy special privileges . . . We have a right to agree or not to agree with certain points in another party's . . . resolutions, in this case, the CPSU.

TOP SECRET

Instead, they argued the declaration should make its references to to the 1957 Moscow Declaration, which we all helped to draft and which we all signed.

7. Third, and clearest of all in its implications, they fought bitterly against the draft statement on "factionalism." We do not have the actual text of the Soviet proposal on this point, nor that of the amended version put forward by Cuba and Brazil and accepted by the USSR. But it is abundantly clear that it was a statement that, in the international movement, the minority must subordinate itself to the majority after a vote has been taken. For example, Suslov in October:

Now on factionalism, we say it is intolerable ... The Leninist principle of respect for the majority is valid also in the international movement, not merely inside each party If we delete this part from our document, the part on factionalism, we will become disunited.

8. No matter what quotations can be found in Lenin,* this is a far cry from the methods familiar to Communists today, and it

* In its 5 November letter, the CPSU included such a quote: "Unity must be based on class discipline, recognition of the will of the majority, and a concerted effort together and in step with that majority." But, the Chinese answered on 14 November, "The CPSU quotes Lenin on this question, but Lenin deals with one single Party, not with an international movement. In fact, the Soviet comrades omitted a word in Lenin's quotation. They left out the word 'Russian'; Lenin dealt with Russian organizational problems in that quotation."

TOP SECRET

is most istructive that the Soviets should put it this way. In Stalin's time, there was of course no question of a majority and a minority. Even in November 1957, the issue apparently did not come up, because disagreement was not so deep as to prevent a unanimous coordinated text. Now, however, the Chinese had dug in their heels,* and the Soviets for their part -- this is the important point -- insisted that, while issues could be discussed and resolutions modified, in the end each party had to submit to the iron discipline of democratic centralism on the international level, just as each member submitted within his national party.

9. This impasse explains a number of otherwise puzzling events during the November sessions. Why did the Soviets, after achieving an agreed text on the overwhelming majority of points during October, haul off and blast the Chinese across the whole range of disputed issues in their 5 November letter to all the parties? Why did both disputants and their followers reopen all the quarrels, nominally settled in October, in the acrimonious November sessions? Why, after all the progress of October, did Teng conclude the debates on 24 November with these same three points?

* On the issue of factionalism, objections were also entered by the Albanian, North Korean, North Vietnamese, Japanese, Australian, Indonesian, Indian, Burmese, and Malayan parties.

TOP SECRET

In the draft there is still the part on factionalism, and there is the charge of national communism, and there is still the point on the 20th and 21st Congresses. This is an effort to impose your views on us The GPC will not agree to these. Supposing we don't write these things into the document. Will this threaten our unity? It is better to leave these things out and reach unanimity...

Because each side realized that none of the agreements reached in October had gone to the heart of the disciplinary issue, embodied in the three Chinese dissents.

10. At this point, there was a break in the proceedings, in which bilateral Sino-Soviet discussions may have occurred. On 1 December all the delegates were reassembled. Suslov presented a final agreed text, saying that it represented "the unanimous will of all the parties" (our underscoring). Khrushchev extolled the harmony and unity of the Communist family, and the ceremonial banqueting began, to be followed by Liu's ostentatiously friendly tour of the Soviet provinces.

11. What happened? The answer is clear in the Declaration itself. Of "national communism" it says not a word. The Soviet Congresses are mentioned only twice. The first occasion is a close paraphrase of a similar statement in the 1957 Declaration, in which the peaceful coexistence line is grounded not only on the 20th and 21st Congresses, but also on the 1957 Declaration itself.

TOP SECRET

"and the documents of other Communist and workers parties," a phrase which was not in the 1957 version. The second reference is equally interesting; it follows another part of the 1957 Declaration word for word, and, since the 21st Congress was held only in 1959, it endorses only the 20th! In contrast, the 1957 Declaration, in which the Chinese claim a major role, is cited eight times. On the factionalism issue, the Soviets lost altogether. In the discussion of relations among parties, the word does not appear. Neither does "majority" or "minority." Instead, the Declaration says (our underscoring):

The interests of the Communist movement demand that every Communist party should display solidarity by observing assessments and conclusions jointly worked out by fraternal parties at their conferences.

And, in the next paragraph of the Declaration, bilateral and multilateral conferences identified as the means of solving questions within the movement. Thus, both the old Stalinist practice of unchallengeable Soviet authority and the new Khrushchev proposal for majority rule have given way to an agreement that only joint conclusions have universal validity. As one delegate put it, "the international movement no longer has a base."

12. With this knowledge of the proceedings, we can dispose of two theories which have been advanced as possible interpretations

of the Conference. One is that, between 24 November and 1 December, the USSR bought Chinese compliance with some important concessions (nuclear weapons?); in fact, it was the Soviets who complied. The other is that each side, having approached the brink of open schism, was horrified and drew back. The Chinese did not draw back; they explained over and over that they were prepared to fulfill their duty as Communists, which was to continue discussions indefinitely until unanimity was achieved. And so, on the crucial issue of discipline, they prevailed.

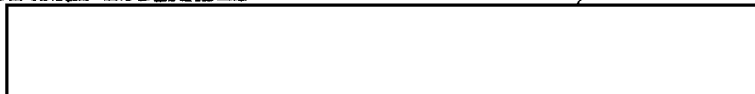
13. The Soviet behavior is more difficult to explain. Why, after all the successes Khrushchev has scored by avoiding Stalin's extreme methods, did he try to impose such far reaching demands upon the power most likely to react violently against such crude demands? The most likely answer is that this was a miscalculation, that he thought that, faced with economic pressures, aggressive condemnation, and a Soviet-mobilized majority, Mao could be brought to heel. Instead, 81 parties saw it demonstrated that the CPSU no longer possesses unchallenged rule over the international Communist movement. And while this fact may have seemed obvious to many long before, at the Moscow Conference it was decisively proved.

14. It should be noted that the USSR has not given up. Khrushchev's insistence upon majority rule, made in his opening address of 10 November, was among the portions excised when the speech was subsequently published in Kommunist on 6 January. But a writer in Red Star picked up the argument on 13 January, using the very Lenin quotation which Khrushchev had employed on 10 November:

To discuss a question, to speak and to hear various opinions, to learn the view of the majority of organized Marxists, to express this view in a decision taken in their absence, and to carry out this decision in good faith -- that is what is called unity everywhere in the world among all reasonable men.

His underscoring, not ours. There have been no final solutions, and new struggles appear to await only new pretexts.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES



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SHERMAN KENT
Chairman